



# Arizona Department of Public Safety

**- For Immediate Release -**

Tuesday February 5, 2008

## **ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY K-9 OFFICER SEIZES 1110 LBS. OF MARIJUANA AFTER PURSUIT**

On Monday, February 4, 2008, at approximately 2:00 PM, an Arizona Department of Public Safety K-9 officer stopped a 2004 GMC pickup northbound on Interstate 19, at Kilometer 60 (Green Valley, AZ.) for a traffic violation. As the officer approached the pickup it sped off, northbound on the interstate. The K-9 officer returned to his vehicle and pursued the GMC pickup. The pickup exited the freeway at the Esperanza off ramp and went into a neighborhood in the Green Valley area. The driver abandoned the pickup and fled on foot. With the assistance of his K-9 partner, the officer was able to apprehend the driver. Inside the pickup 1110 lbs. of marijuana was found and seized. The marijuana had a street value of approximately \$555,000.

The driver of the pickup, Ernesto LaHuerra, age 38, from Nogales, Sonora, was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana, possession of marijuana for sale, transportation of marijuana for sale, and unlawful flight from law enforcement.

The Arizona Department of Public Safety K-9 Unit has been instrumental in removing large amounts of illegal drugs from Arizona and nationally. The unit is committed to keeping our communities safe through their successful drug interdiction efforts.

*The mission of the Arizona Department of Public Safety, one of the most dynamic state-level law enforcement agency in United States, is to protect human life and property by enforcing state laws, deterring criminal activity, assuring the safety of the motoring public on Arizona's highways and providing vital scientific, technical and operational support to other criminal justice agencies. The Department, also one of Arizona's largest law enforcement agencies with some 2,200 sworn and civilian employees, consists of four divisions – Highway Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Criminal Justice Support and Agency Support. The Department is headquartered in Phoenix with offices located in more than 80 communities within Arizona's 15 counties.*

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